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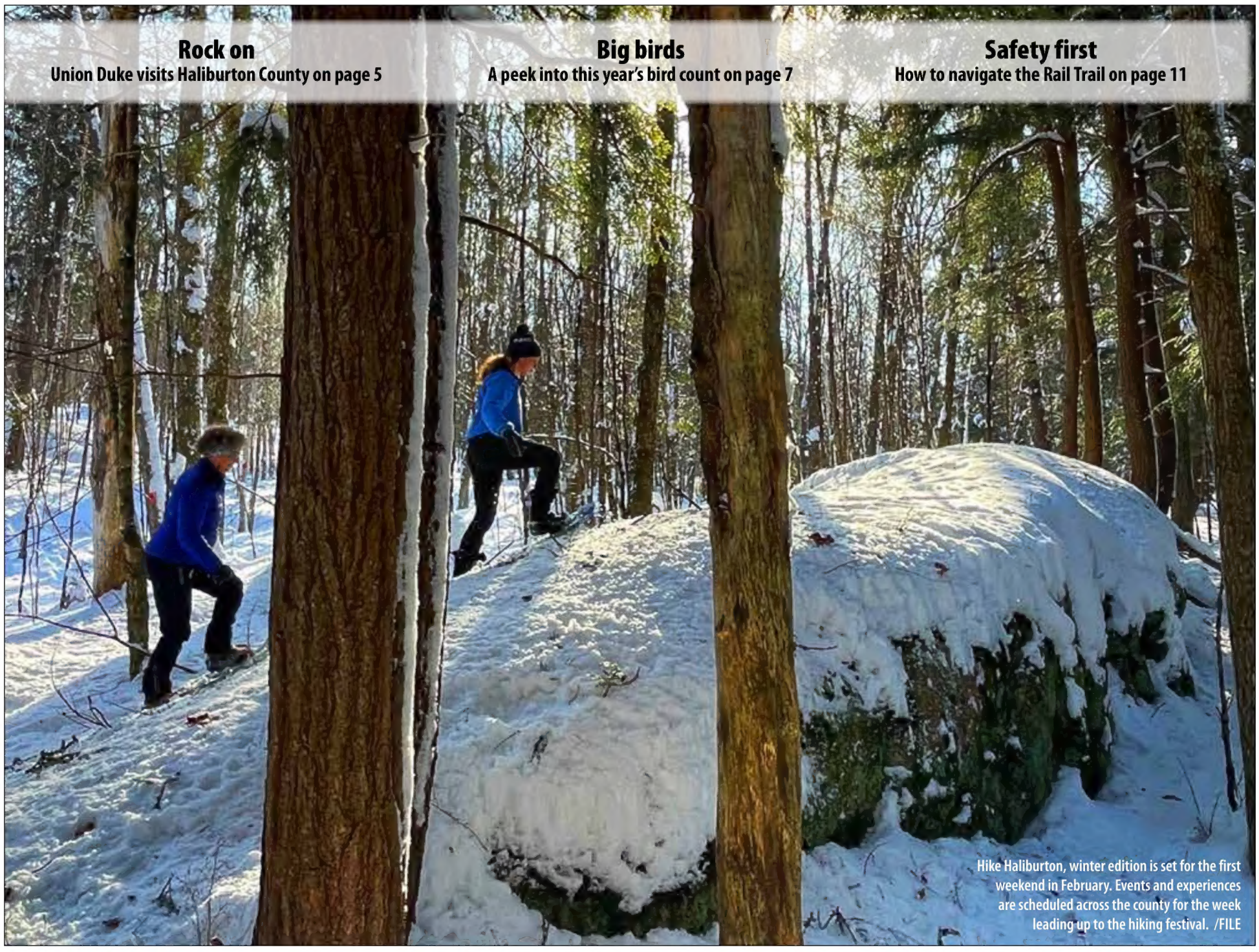
Rock on
Union Duke visits Haliburton County on page 5

Big birds
A peek into this year's bird count on page 7

Safety first
How to navigate the Rail Trail on page 11



Hike Haliburton, winter edition is set for the first weekend in February. Events and experiences are scheduled across the county for the week leading up to the hiking festival. /FILE

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DEE-DEE: *Dance*

OH. MY. Gosh.

So *this* is Canada. It ROCKS! I got here last June, but didn't start Sixth Grade until September. Except up here they call it Grade 6. From what I've seen, school isn›t quite the same as Pennsylvania. The weather is, though. And maple leaves. And hockey.

Speaking of *Leafs*, they're not my favorite team. *Sceptres* all the way! I also like skateboarding and dancing. Not couples. Street-style. Hiphop. I've been competing for three years. I'm into it. Pretty good, too.

DEB REED
Wind in the Attic

I'm one of two new girls from other countries. I make friends in seconds. My parents always talked about Canada. They want me to grow up here. I've already been to Ontario. Last year, I entered a dance battle in Niagara Falls, and came in second for my age group. My outfit is a ball cap, high-tops and tracksuit. Mine is plaid, like oversized PJs with elastic cuffs. Boys and girls dance and dress the same.

There's a cool studio right here in town. With professional speakers and spotlights. An older boy from another class also practices there, but he doesn't want to compete. He told me he teaches kids in the school gym. I've been hanging out with him at recess. He also said he overheard two teachers talking about a possible school talent show in December. That would be awesome.

Something else I heard was that a travelling music teacher might start visiting us some afternoons in the new year. *School of Rock!* I'd love to learn drums. I already play *Smoke on the Water* on Mom's guitar. An electric one would be nice. I might form a band. But how do I play drums, guitar, dance AND sing vocals all at once? Hmmmm … another puzzle to decode. That's not the best song to dance to anyway.

About puzzles. I like solving mysteries. I'm very curious about this teacher, and I want to find out more. Maybe I'll follow her around. It says *Miss T. Fields* on the door. She doesn't smile constantly, but I prefer that to *never*, or *always*. I wonder if she's married (*Miss* might just be her teacher name), and where she's from. I don't know her accent. It's nice. And she never yells. That's amazing. This class seems decent. Except for a couple of kids. But hardly any bad stuff has happened so far. Most of us seem to like her. Maybe not Oscar. Or Katie. But they hate everybody.

I'm really nervous about writing. I make spelling mistakes, and I've never done cursive. I've been using a laptop program to correct and rewrite my work. Miss Fields wants us to hand in two whole pages every single month with only parents for overnight help. And *not* mark it? Wish I could dance instead. She seems to like every kind of music, which she plays quietly while we write or paint. Hers hardly has beats, though, so I just calm down instead.

It'll be an interesting year!

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Ice fishing for fun and sport

STEVE GALEA
Beyond 35

WHEN PEOPLE think about ice fishing, they typically envision it as a highly sedentary activity in which farting and grumbling anglers sit inside a hut, eat beef jerky, drink coffee from thermoses, and stare at fishing lines that descend through dark holes in the ice.

That, of course, is a highly unfair stereotype. We don't always sit inside the huts.

In fact, if done incorrectly, ice fishing can be an extremely athletic activity – though, to be clear, no ice angler is proud of this.

Having said that, if there ever was an opportunity to create several new winter sports worth watching, it lies in the pastime of ice fishing.

For example, one easy and highly entertaining sporting event could involve competitors each taking a dull, hand-powered auger onto a lake in late February. The farther north you go, the more entertaining this would be.

The athletes would hand drill an 8-inch hole through 36- or more inches of ice. This would be an endurance event, since it would probably take until at least sundown to drill the hole. I think we can all agree that this could easily be an Olympic event, though it might inflict unnecessary cruelty upon the Jamaican ice hole drilling team and other competitors from less wintry climes.

Power augers also have challenges which might provide opportunity for good sport. For instance, if your power auger drill bit gets stuck halfway down a hole, the ensuing mayhem is quite reminiscent of bull riding, though bull riders typically stay on for longer. I ask you, who wouldn't want to watch that?

Yet another under-rated athletic event is starting a borrowed gas-powered auger that your friend says, "runs like a charm." This would truly be an emotional and dramatic sport.

The same could be said of watching competitors try to catch a portable ice hut tent that has been caught by a 60 kilometre-an-hour wind. As any ice angler will tell you, there is no greater spectator sport.

If you like throwing events instead,

might I suggest the bait-casting reel bird nest throw? This is an event that sees the athlete throw a hopelessly tangled fishing reel as far as he or she can from the ice fishing hut.

If you are more into sprinting however, there is also the standard 10-yard sprint to the ice rod that's about to be pulled down the hole. Though it is only 10 yards, the glare ice makes the athletes run 100. Again, fun to watch!

The point is ice fishing is not the unathletic activity people believe it to be – unless, as previously mentioned, it is done correctly.

The confusion is understandable, I suppose, since the average ice angler has the physique of a half-melted snowman. But don't let that fool you. Beneath all those extra pounds and stretched long john waistbands is a world-class athlete just raring to go.

Maybe I am being a bit partisan here, but I truly believe that we Canadians could dominate ice fishing-related sports for years to come. That's not saying that the Swedes, Finns, Norwegians, Russians, or Americans from North Dakota and Minnesota couldn't put up a good fight, however.

In the meantime, I have been practicing my 100-yard sprints. You never know when you need to run 10 yards to save a fishing rod.

Looking ahead into 2026

TERESA JORDAN
Community Living Contemplations

I WAS asked this week, as part of a good conversation about goal setting, to identify my peak moments of 2025. Here is the interesting thing, the facilitator gave us a lot of time for the exercise.

So, at first, I focused on the big shiny things: a wedding, a vacation, a professional achievement. However, as I continued to think and write, I found myself remembering more little moments like, the moment when my kids installed a water fountain in the pond and I spent the afternoon beside it. Or the day that I went on a road trip with my spouse and we had no agenda or real destination and we just rambled around all day on an adventure in Ontario.

I think sometimes we get lost in the idea that the highlight reel is big ticket items that we plan and save for. When we have more time to think about times that made our hearts sing, we can start to think of the snapshots in our reels where there was a great impact that was more spontaneous.

All this reflecting then led to the question: what does success in 2026 look and feel like? It was an impactful move from the peak moment reflection because after the time with my thoughts I was able to be more mindful that a successful 2026 will have a mix of the big moments that I work for and plan and the small unexpected delights that just happen on a quiet Saturday often when we are making other plans. Take a moment to reflect on your own, what were the peaks, what do you want to chase and make happen in 2026 and enter stage right.

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First county baby arrives on New Year's Day

EMILY STONEHOUSE
County Life Editor

January 1 is a date that brings fresh starts, new beginnings, and the start of a brand new chapter.

For one Harcourt family, January 1 will symbolize something a little extra special.

On New Year's Day, Noella Floyd-Foulds and her husband, Harley, welcomed their fourth child, Teresa Mae Floyd Foulds, born at their home with the help of the Haliburton-Bancroft Midwives.

Teresa was the first midwives-recorded baby in Haliburton County for 2026.

"My last pregnancy was three weeks early," said Noella, "so I was definitely planning for a 2026 baby." With a due date of Jan. 10, Noella and Harley knew that they may be having a Christmas baby, "but that's not what I wanted," Noella laughed. "I wanted to make it to the new year."

She began having contractions on New Year's Eve, but noted that she didn't believe she was quite ready yet. By the next day, the contractions were coming on stronger, but Noella had a scheduled appointment with the midwives that afternoon. The first midwife arrived at their home at 3:30 p.m. for their appointment, but by 4:41, Teresa had arrived. "It happened pretty quickly," chuckled Noella, "but everything went really well."

All of Teresa's siblings were born with the support of the Haliburton-Bancroft midwives as well, with the eldest being born in Peterborough, and the next two born at home in Harcourt.

Noella and Harley met while attending Algonquin College for architectural engineering in Ottawa. Harley originally hails from Haliburton County, so a few years ago, the couple returned to the community to start their family. "I've really come to like living up here," said Noella, "The city is too busy for me now."

And now that the couple have had their children in their Haliburton home, it makes the space that much more special. "I'm really glad I had Harley right next to me, encouraging and supporting me through each contraction," said Noella, "and the calmness from the midwives reassuring me that I had been in this position before, and I would be holding Teresa very soon."

As a family of six now, Noella shared that the big siblings - now ages six, five, and three - are really rising to the occasion of supporting their new baby sister. "We really do feel complete now," she said.

As Teresa kickstarts the busy year ahead for the Haliburton-Bancroft Midwives, the family is settling into their new routine, in their new chapter together. "I never thought we'd have the first baby in the county, on the first day of the new year," said Noella, "but now her birth story is that much more special."

Teresa Mae Floyd Foulds was the first baby born in Haliburton County this year, arriving on the afternoon of Jan. 1 at home in Harcourt and joining her three older siblings. /submitted

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The band Union Duke will be starting their cross-country tour in Haliburton at the end of the month. /submitted

Union Duke rocks Haliburton

EMILY STONEHOUSE
County Life Editor

It's a little rock, a little folk, pinches of bluegrass, and a smattering of roots music.

Union Duke. A Toronto-based band who has been making music for nearly two decades. They've toured the world; across North America and Europe.

And now, following the release of their newest album, they'll be visiting the Haliburton Highlands. "We are lucky to be in a place where there is a large support for folk music," said Matt Warry-Smith, the drummer and founding member of the band. "I'm incredibly grateful."

The band will be gracing the local stage at the Haliburton Legion on Jan. 31. But they're no strangers to exploring rural communities. A number of their albums have been written and recorded using cottage country as their background.

"I love the warmth of a real place," said Warry-Smith. "A lot of my favourite albums were recorded by guys holed up in one space together and working through it together. In our albums, we are seeking a vibe, and that vibe isn't perfection."

When you listen to Union Duke, you could draw similarities to bands such as Blue Rodeo or Mumford and Sons. With a lively banjo and jaunty lyrics, the tunes are catchy, bright, and spirited. You'll find yourself humming them long after the album ends. "The tenets of Union Duke have always been folk, country, roots, and rock," said Warry-Smith. "But with time, it's evolved, and our priorities have shifted within those genres."

At the core of the rock group, Warry-Smith credits the friendship between bandmates as the reason the group has continued with such success. "We have a respect for each other," he said. "We just really prioritize making music together, and once you just prioritize that, the music gets better, the shows get better."

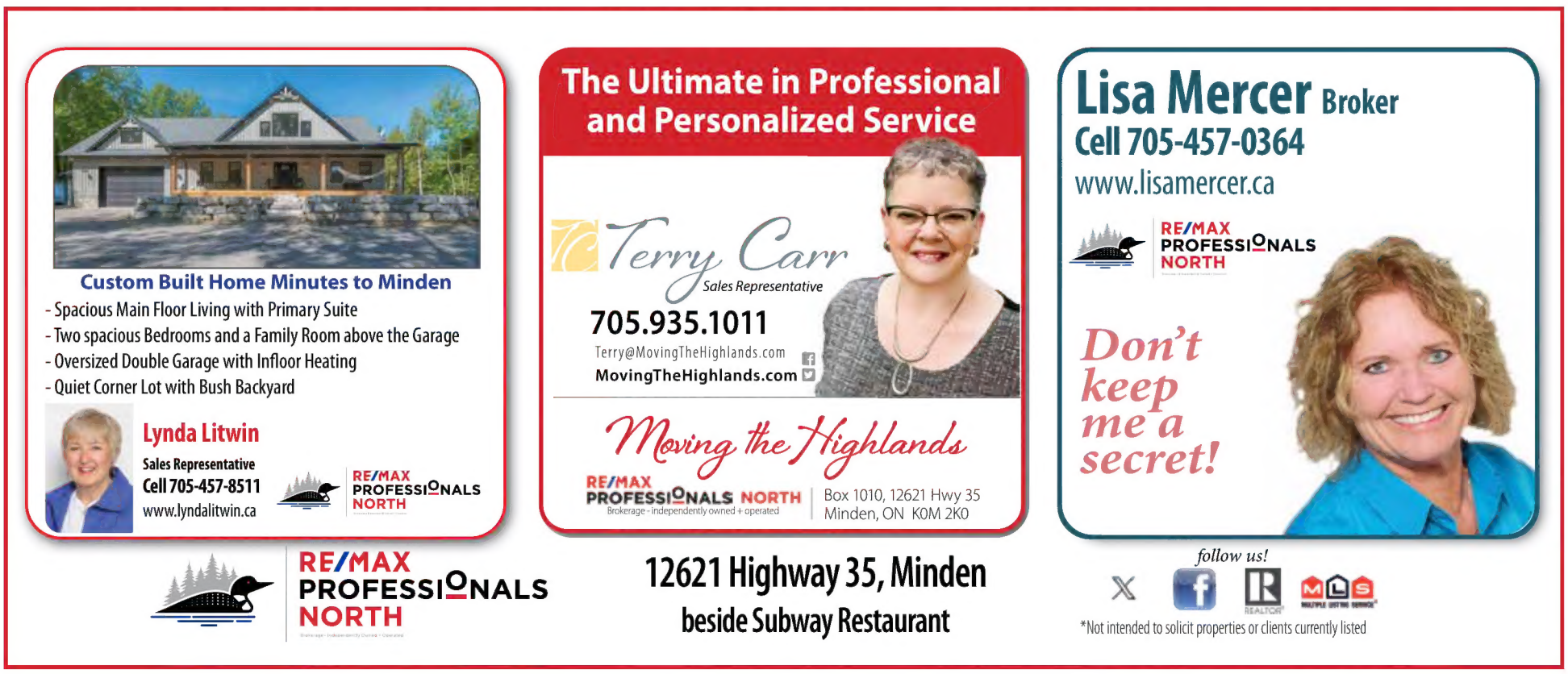
Warry-Smith described a Union Duke show as "very high energy," he said, with a laugh. "We're a pretty good time band. We want people to experience joy and levity when they come out."

But in light of the charged political climate, the drummer recognized his role as an advocate for those in need. "It's almost impossible to be apolitical these days," he said. "I think it's important that if you have any kind of soapbox, you can use that to spread a message.

"While we like our shows and our music to be a place of refuge, you can't tune it out completely," he said, in reference to the steady stream of negative news coming in from around the world. "In difficult times, in dark times, we need community more than ever."

Union Duke can be heard through any number of platforms, including YouTube, Band Camp, and Spotify. They also sell merchandise and albums at their shows, and the newest album will be available for purchase shortly.

Tickets for the upcoming Haliburton show can be purchased through the Folk Society, via www.haliburtonfolk.com. The event will be held at the Haliburton Legion on Jan. 31, with the doors opening at 7 p.m.



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Cozy

IN SCHOOL we learn about the term onomatopoeia; an ironically large word that indicates a sound associated with a name. The buzz of a bee, the sizzle of a grill.

Now I know this isn't entirely grammatically correct, but I would argue that the word 'cozy' has that same effect. While 'cozy' isn't associated with an action, I find the word itself to feel warm, comforting, and safe.

EMILY STONEHOUSE
County Life Editor

Based on a quick Google search, the first written references to the word sprouted up in the mid-18th century, identified in Scottish dialects with the term *colsie*, which meant snug or comfortable in a setting.

Beyond that, it's thought to have been used even earlier in Scandinavian countries, with Norwegian references to *koselig*, a term applied to feeling warm and safe.

It's interesting that these supposed origins stemmed from places where there is significant darkness and dampness. In order to feel cozy, you must combat the cold. One does not come without the other.

Also from the Norwegian dialect is the term *hygge*. This word was all the rage a few years ago, when author Meik Wiking published the book titled *The Little Book of Hygge: Danish Secrets to Happy Living*. Wiking is the CEO of Copenhagen's Happiness Research Institute (an absolutely fascinating concept that a country has dedicated funding and research to chase happiness and a peak state of mental health), and was an international bestseller.

Readers flocked to the idea of *hygge*, which essentially translates to a lifestyle focused on being cozy and content. Requirements to *hygge* include soft lighting, warm drinks, a cozy atmosphere, and a slow pace at life.

The success of the book showcased the desire to slow down. To chase a life of coziness and contentment, and to strive for happiness in a world that never slows down.

For a while, the word 'cozy' was largely applied in marketing efforts to sell sweat suits and oversized jumpers. But I always found it interesting to see companies applying 'cozy' in their selling strategies, because it isn't a material, a description of the apparel itself.

It's a feeling they are trying to capture. That sense of security, of warmth, of comfort.

Nowadays, we see the term chased more in home decor. It truly comes to the forefront during winter months, when hibernation is top of mind; swirling deep in our brains as animals who have evolved so far but feel tied to our seasonal roots more than we consciously recognize.

So how do we make cozy? How do we chase *hygge?*

I remember when I moved into my home, it was natural to follow the tricks and trends seen online to make a space feel right. At the time, grey living rooms were all the rage, white cupboards were seen as desirably sterile.

I couldn't do it. I tried, and it just wasn't me. I dedicated myself to one rule in our home design: it must be cozy. And I think that cozy may look different to some.

But to us, its wool blankets resting on the worn-down and well-loved couches. It's painted cupboard handles in bright patterns and fairy lights dancing across the fireplace mantle. Its wiry branches that have snapped in the storms, that have found a home under our roof, holding paper snowflakes and wooden carved mushrooms.

It's also messy, cluttered, and filled with dog-eared books and mix-matched pottered mugs.

To us, there is cozy in the chaos.

And the greatest compliment I can receive on the style of our home isn't from a magazine or a decorator, but when my kids come through the door after school and say with a sigh, 'it's so cozy in here."

It's more than just a word.

It's a feeling.

Top 10 reasons hibernation is not for you

WINTER IS here. And while we shovel, the bears sleep. Many of us are a little resentful of this. Some of us secretly believe it's a good idea. But, trust me, it is not.

If God wanted us to hibernate, we would have been born with a love of honey and an uncontrollable urge to say, "Oh, bother."

STEVE GALEA
Humour Columnist

Even so, some of you are still tempted.

With that in mind, here are the top 10 reasons hibernation is not for you.

1. You have a weak bladder.
2. Your dog and/or kids would never let it happen.
3. You don't have that many vacation days left.
4. No sane person wants to sleep with a bear.
5. Sleeping in a cave or under a root ball is not as great as it sounds.
6. You'd have too much catching up to do when spring arrives.
7. Restless leg syndrome is real.
8. Who's going to feed the cats?
9. No one wants to clean that much sleep out of their eyes.
10. You never want to hear your spouse say, "OK, for the next three months, you get up with the baby!"

Whispers

Shrine of pines shrouded in Snow,
I stand among them, inhaling the silence of this
place, forest Air, pure as the stream that trickles below,
its flow stilling to a whisper as I listen to it breathe,
in this sanctuary of trees,
their branches laden with Snow,
making it easier for me to bear my own quiet burdens, veering off the trail to follow footsteps left
behind in the Snow,
leading me here, to meander between the pines, their
spines stretching up toward the silver dome of Sky,
my eyes blinking up at slivers of light, as my boots
sink deeper into Snow,
wondering whether the roots of the pines intertwine
beneath the frozen earth,
growing so close together here, in this patch of
forest, saplings springing from Snow in the spaces
between them,
some of them so small, only their top branches poke
through, I ruffle their heads as I pass by,
wondering how long it will take them to grow as tall
as the elders, shielding them from Wind and storm,
quiet so loud, I hear my Breath breathe, disturbing
the peace of these sleeping trees,
encroaching on their winter's rest,
spotting a bushy tail swishing in the Snow behind
the trunk of a tree, my fingers reaching for
the stash of seeds,
buried in the cave of my coat pocket, leftover from
feeding the chickadees, scattering them in the Snow,
watching as the squirrel skitters toward them, barely
noticing that I am here, as I watch it peck at the Snow,
how tame it appears, not afraid of this interloper
that's trespassing across its patch of forest where it
scavenges in the Snow,
its tail swishing away without even glancing my
way, as it feasts on seeds,
I turn around to plod through the Snow, back down
toward the trickle of stream,
a black squiggle in the Snow,
quietly thanking the shrine of pines for welcoming
me this afternoon, for letting me wander among them,
having nothing to offer them, leaving only my footsteps behind, while they offer me their stillness and
silence without complaint,
as I clomp across their space, this sacred place where
I come just to meander and breathe the Air
that they share with me,
I reach the stream that trickles through the Snow,
bend down to dip my fingers into its flow,
the water, ice cold,
but how Alive it makes me feel, in the dead of winter, crouching here, by the stream, alongside a tree
whose roots slither above the ground, thick as
snakes, intertwined with the roots of another tree,
I stand back up, feeling my knees creak, stretching
my spine, tall as the pines, leaving my burdens back
there among them,
as their branches hold the weight of Snow, shielding
the saplings that grow between them,
that someday will stretch as tall as their elders,
reaching up toward the dome of Sky,
growing old in the only Home they've ever known,
receiving visitors without expecting anything in
return,
as they live and breathe and grow, weathering
storms and Snow, alone, together,
tethered to one another by their roots and the Air
they breathe, the stillness of these winter trees, seeping
into me,
as I stand here, listening to whispers of the stream's
flow, a scribble in the Snow.

Sylvie Kalenda

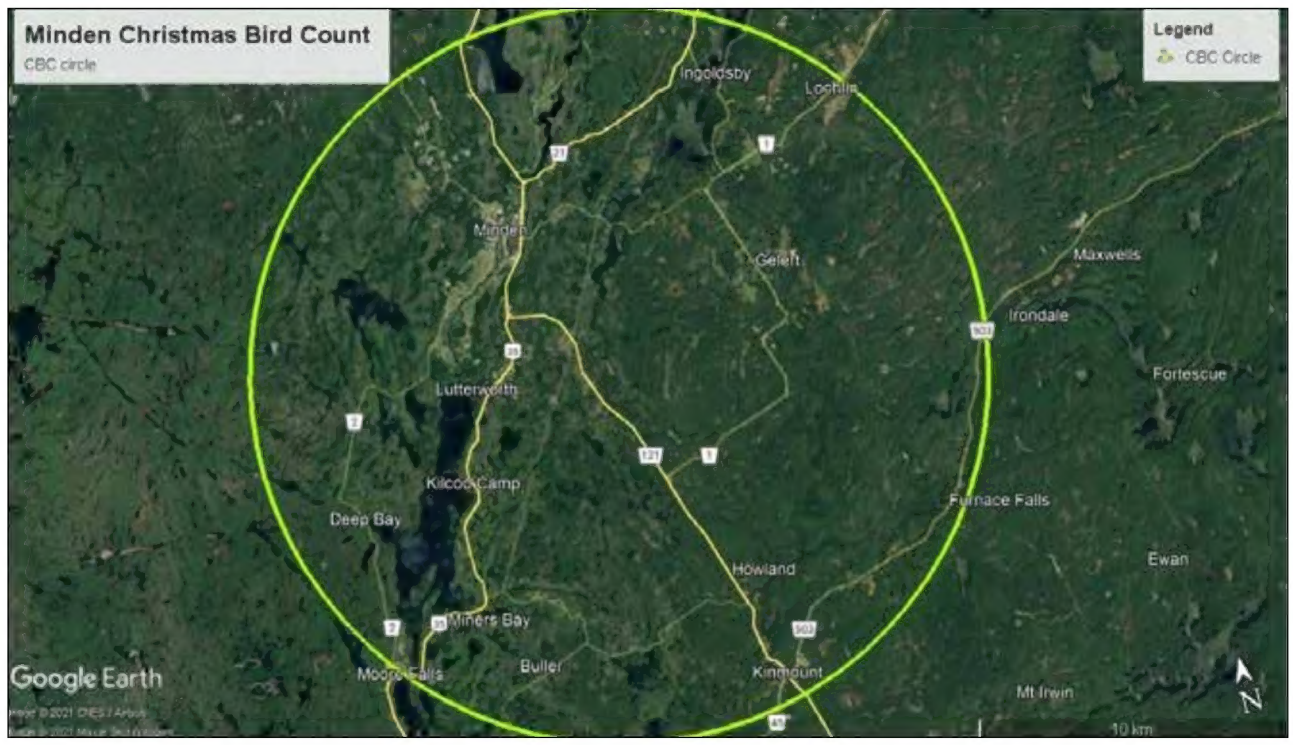
An adult Bald Eagle takes flight. /Photos by Ed Poropat

A male Evening Grosbeak basks in the morning sunshine

2025 Minden Christmas Bird Count results

ED POROPAT

County Life Contributor



The 59th annual Minden Christmas Bird Count (CBC) was held on Sunday, Dec. 14, with a record 35 field observers surveying birds within the standardized count circle. Additional data were provided by feeder-watchers monitoring activity in their own yards. Conditions were cool and sunny, though a brisk wind developed later in the day. By the end of the 24-hour count period, observers recorded 33 species and 3,355 individual birds, both well below the 20-year averages of 46 species and 4,263 birds. An additional three species were found during count week.

The Minden CBC began in 1967, when local naturalist Dennis Barry and his mentor, George Scott, were the only two participants. Since then, the count has grown steadily in size and popularity. Over its 59-year history, an impressive 110 species have been recorded - making Minden one of the most diverse Christmas Bird Counts on the Canadian Shield.

The count circle includes Moore Falls, Kinmount, Gelert, Lochlin, Ingoldsby, and Minden. It is one of nearly 500 counts conducted across Canada each winter, and approximately 2,700 across North America. All data are submitted to the Audubon Society and contribute to continent-wide tracking of bird populations, movements, and long-term conservation planning.

Poor seed production across much of the boreal forest this past summer has had a noticeable impact on winter bird numbers. Seed-eating species have dispersed in search of food, resulting in roaming flocks of Evening Grosbeaks, Pine Grosbeaks, and Redpolls passing through the region. While some are stopping briefly at local feeders, many are continuing on due to limited natural food sources.

Cold temperatures and low water levels led to extensive ice cover, reducing waterfowl diversity during this year's count. Trumpeter Swans (14) and Mallards (313) continued to do well, while American Black Ducks declined to just three individuals - the lowest total since 1996. Canada Goose (six), Common Goldeneye (29), and Hooded Merganser (seven) were present in below-average numbers, and a single Common Loon lingered on open water at Mountain Lake.

Wild Turkeys (163) remained stable, but Ruffed Grouse dropped to a single bird - the lowest count since records began in 1967. Raptors were scarce, with only two Red-tailed Hawks and two Barred Owls observed. Bald Eagles were a bright spot, with a record 26 counted, including 14 seen together at the landfill, indicating a strong wintering population.

Rock Pigeons (306) reached a record high, while Mourning Doves (121) were also plentiful. Despite heavy ice cover, one Belted Kingfisher remained in the area, foraging actively along open stretches of the Gull River.

Woodpecker numbers were lower than average, including Hairy (56) and Downy (26), though fewer feeders may have affected detection. Four Pileated Woodpeckers were recorded, and two Red-bellied Woodpeckers - a still uncommon species locally - were a notable highlight. A healthy acorn crop in the fall meant that some Blue Jays (283) have decided to brave the winter. Black-capped Chickadee (767) numbers remain well below average. Aside from supplemental feeding at feeders, food availability in the woods is limited, which likely prompted many individuals to migrate to more productive feeding areas.

Some winter finches were present, but none occurred in exceptional numbers. The colourful, gregarious Evening Grosbeak (545) was well represented during the count, although numbers remain well below the nearly 1,200 birds recorded in the 1990s. A few Pine Grosbeaks (50) added a splash of pink to the snowy landscape as they searched for fruit and berries. The soft twittering of American Goldfinches (183) could still be heard in several locations within the count circle, despite many having left the area in search of food; among them was a single Pine Siskin. A small number of Dark-eyed Juncos (30) and American Tree Sparrows (32) were also counted, most of them associated with feeding stations.

Several species were conspicuously absent this year. Common Merganser, Brown Creeper, Golden-crowned Kinglet, and Snow Bunting were not observed during either count day or count week, despite each having been recorded on more than fifty previous counts. Notably, the day after the count, a lingering Winter Wren (one) and a scarce Black-backed Woodpecker (one) were discovered at Dahl Forest. In addition, Northern Cardinals (three) were reported visiting a feeder in Minden.

Overall, the 2025 Minden Christmas Bird Count will be remembered as a quiet event, yielding relatively few birds. As we now find ourselves in the deep throes of winter, it will not be long before the cheerful songs of arriving spring migrants once again fill the landscape. A sincere thank you to all those who participated in the 2025 count.

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cherylsmithremax.com

10 MINUTES FROM HALIBURTON $519,000

1 1/2 storey private home with 2+1 bedrooms and just over 1500 sq. ft. of living space - galley style kitchen with plenty of storage space - freshly renovated living area with new pot lighting - w/o to font and side deck - main floor laundry with a 2pc. bath - 3 pc bath on 2nd floor - new plank flooring on second floor - w/o partially finished lower level - FA propane heat - 1.58 acres of privacy

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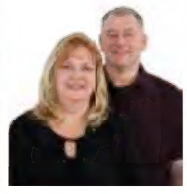
Sales Representative
705-455-2034
ted@tedvasey.ca

133 ACRES OF RAW CANADIAN WILDERNESS $399,000

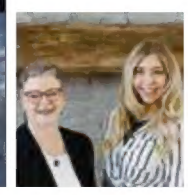
* Stunning Views and Trails Throughout
* 5 Rustic Off-Grid Cabins
* 3300' of Year-Round Road Frontage
* Nearby Access to Snowmobile Trails System
* Perfectly Poised For Those With A Passion For The Great Outdoors



Ken Barry
Broker 705-754-5280
Jacquie Barry
Realtor® 705-457-0652
www. kenbarry.com
Out Standing In Our Field

KASHAGAWIGAMOG LAKE - $1,070,000

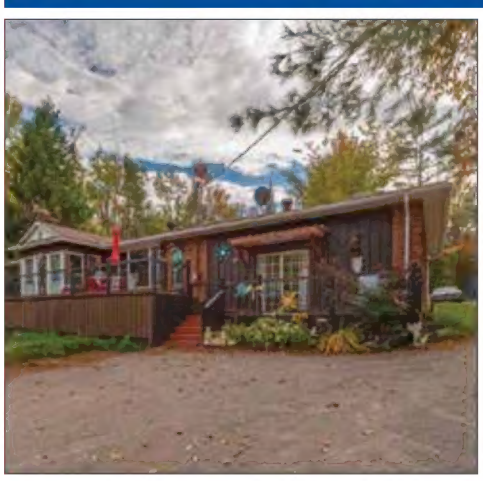
Meticulously maintained yr-round home on the popular 5-lake chain. 2+1 beds, 3 baths plus a finished basement with a kitchenette and a walkout to the waterfront. Enjoy lake views from the deck or the gazebo, or relax on the dock. Beautiful estate-like property with an expansive backyard leading to the water, plus a paved driveway & a spacious detached 2-car garage. Make this your home!



Terry Carr & Drew Staniforth
Sales Representatives
705-935-1011
MovingTheHighlands.com

Wishing you a New Year full of peace and love
2026
HAPPY NEW YEAR
Rick Forget Broker 705-457-0580 • haliburtonhighlands-remax.ca

26 REID ST., KINMOUNT $648,000



Welcome to a very private, spa-like setting with many recent updates and MAIN FLOOR LIVING.
The perfect full time home or cottage.
- Newly renovated home
- Open Concept and Main Floor Living
- 3 bedrooms * 2 bathrooms
- Updated kitchen
- Living Room and Family Room
- Above-Ground Pool and Hot Tub
- Beautiful private lot

Jackie Hardman
Sales Representative
705-879-8041
jackiedhardman@gmail.com

SOLD SOLD SOLD SOLD SOLD

Beautiful home w/ 4 acres /waterfall & 347 ft. of shoreline on Pine Lake. Mn. Fl. open KIT & LR design w/electric FP & separate DR, guest BATH, master B.R. w/ ensuite & walk in closet & lg 4 season sunroom. Finished walkout basement w/radiant in-floor heat, large FAM room w/propane FP & bar. 2 BR, laundry & BATH on lower level. Lakeside deck, sandy shoreline & stone patio w/fire pit. Att GAR w/ workshop. Year round road, close to West Guilford, Lakeside Golf Club & Sir Sams Ski/Ride, approx. 12 min from Haliburton. This is a must see property to appreciate!

Deb Lambe
Sales Representative
705-854-0103
debra.lambe@gmail.com

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705-457-1011

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705-286-2911

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CUSTOM BUILT HOME MINUTES TO MINDEN

- Spacious Main Floor Living with Primary Suite
- Two spacious Bedrooms and a Family Room above the Garage
- Oversized Double Garage with Infloor Heating
- Quiet Corner Lot with Bush Backyard

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Sales Representative
705-457-8511
lynda@lyndalitwin.ca

1211 GELERT ROAD $1,200,000

- 2 bedroom, 2 bathroom, 2019 Royal Home. Large deck surrounding home
- 49.9 Acres with trails
- Home is a dual heat system. Can use either forced air propane furnace or forced air wood boiler.
- 55'x24' shop or office with in-floor heating, steps from the house.
- More outbuildings and storage on the property, Heated greenhouse
- Minutes from Minden and Kinmount

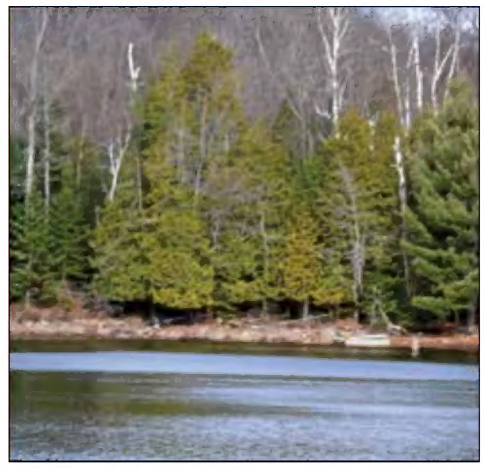
Kelly Mercer
Broker
705-455-7500
kelly@kelly-mercer.ca

3777 GLAMORGAN ROAD $834,000

Custom built in 2020. 2 bedroom, 2 bathroom home. Open-concept with vaulted ceilings and large windows. High-end kitchen with Dekton counters, stylish cabinetry and plenty of space. Large bedrooms and bathrooms. Sitting on 5.95 acres just minutes from Haliburton. Full basement is partially finished. 24' x 30' detached garage. Great privacy and close to town.

Lisa Mercer
Broker
705-457-0364
www.lisamercer.ca
lisa@lisamercer.ca

DRAG LAKE LOT $319,000



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John Parish 705-457-5485
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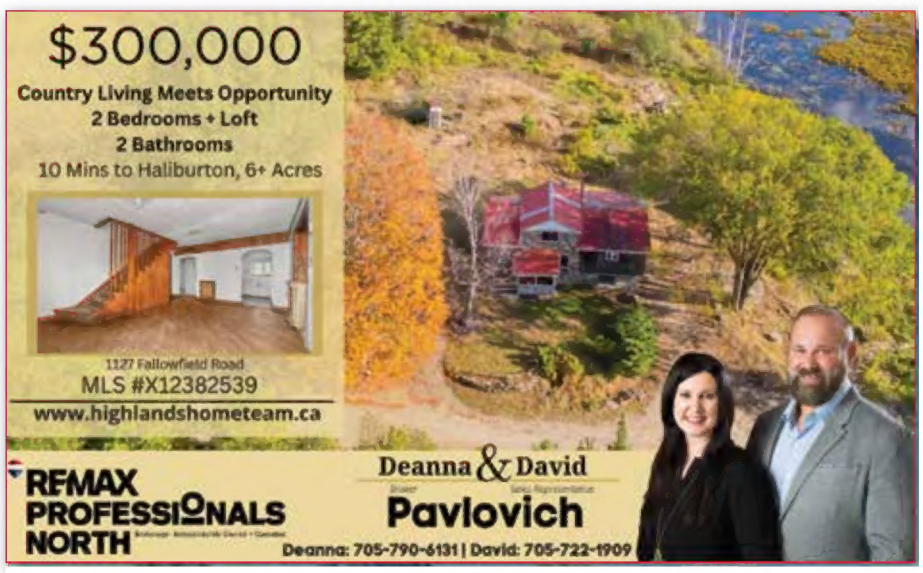
Sales Representatives



Nature in your backyard

County Life welcomes photo submissions depicting life in the Highlands. Email emily@ haliburtonpress.com. Please ensure images are high resolution - 200 dpi, 10 inches at its longest edge.

Muskrat swimming by Debi Ireland

A blue jay with its breakfast by Vivien Mausz

Fisher by Tammy Nash

Two male Mergansers by Debi Ireland

HALIBURTON COUNTY HUSKIES

Home Game

TRENTON GOLDEN HAWKS VS HALIBURTON COUNTY HUSKIES

Saturday, Jan. 24 - 4 p.m.

Upcoming Home Games

Saturday, Jan. 31
4 p.m.

BURLINGTON CougARS

Saturday, Feb. 7
4 p.m.

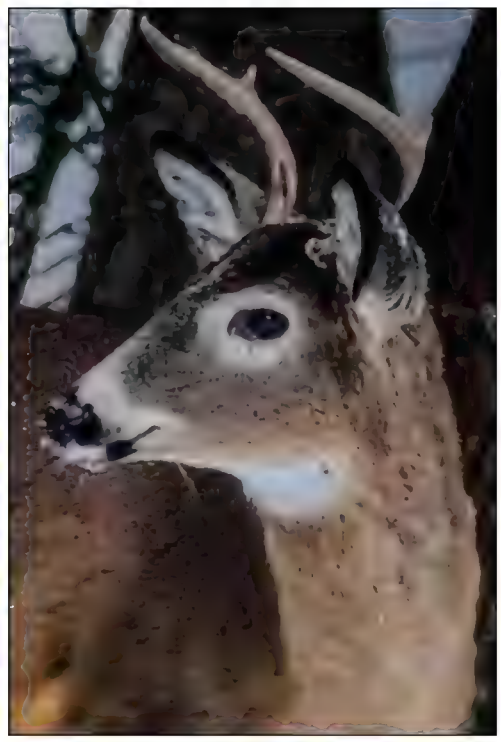
S.G. Nesbitt Memorial Arena

For more information please visit our website

WWW.HUSKIESHOCKEY.CA

Pink tongue by Tammy Nash

Rascally raccoon by Randy Barber



Big antlers by Jill Moulton

Visiting neighbours by Emily Stonehouse

HCSA issues safety plea for Rail Trail riders

THOMAS SMITH
County Life Staff

The Haliburton County Snowmobile Association (HCSA) is issuing a reminder to riders as the season gets underway in the Highlands: slow down and stop, or risk losing more than just trail access.

In a candid statement on social media titled "WE NEED TO DO BETTER ... !!", the HCSA highlighted a dangerous trend on the Rail Trail. Despite clear markings and recent infrastructure upgrades, the association reports that a significant number of riders are ignoring basic safety laws.

"In chatting with one of our trailside neighbours over the weekend, we learned riders in droves are not coming to a full stop, and rolling through at driveway crossings," the association said in the statement. "This concern is not coming from the OPP; it's from our community."

HCSA president said in a recent telephone interview that the trail isn't just a recreation corridor, it's a residential area.

"The rail line, people are living on the rail line," Neil Vanderstoop said. "If you slow down to at least a walk ... It's far better than just [rolling through]."

The Rail Trail is one of the region's busiest corridors. During high-traffic periods like the Family Day weekend, the president reported more than 1,000 sleds heading north and 800 heading south in a single window last year. With more than 40 driveway and road crossings between Haliburton and Kinmount, the risk of a collision is a constant reality.

Vanderstoop noted that while "the majority of our riders are doing the right thing," he expressed frustration with those who disobey signage, including experienced riders.

"I followed three older men recently. They hardly hesitated at a stop sign," he said. "Which is very frustrating. We put this stuff on Facebook as reminders ... some people don't even understand. There are a lot of new people who ride snowmobiles that are just learning the ropes."

The HCSA noted in the social media post that there have been "tragic life-changing and life-ending consequences" on the Rail Trail. In an effort to prevent a potential tragedy, the county and landowners recently upgraded all stop signs to full-sized regulatory signs at road crossings.

Vanderstoop said that the consequences for ignoring the larger signs are much steeper than a simple trail fine. Blowing through a full-sized stop sign can impact a rider's actual driver's license.

While the 2026 season is just getting started, the OPP provided our papers with some year-end statistics around snowmobile-related traffic infractions. For 2025, the Haliburton Highlands Detachment saw 28 charges laid under the Motorized Snow Vehicle Act (MSVA) and 36 formal warnings issued.

While the OPP did not provide a specific breakdown of the offenses, MSVA charges typically involve:

Failing to carry a valid trail permit

Operating without proper insurance or registration

Speeding on groomed trails

Failing to wear a proper helmet

Operating a snowmobile while under the influence

As for the HCSA, it is urging riders to respect the signs so that enforcement doesn't have to be the primary motivator for safety.

"We want you back next weekend," the association said.

Legion Events

Branch 441 Kinmount

Monday: Bid Euchre 1 p.m.
Tuesday: Closed
Wednesday: Mixed Darts, 7:30 p.m.
Thursday: Closed
Friday: Bingo- Doors open at 5 p.m., play at 6:45 p.m.
Supper specials every Friday starting at 5 p.m. May purchase special and eat in club room downstairs.
Clubroom opens at 4 p.m.
Saturday: Clubroom opens at 3 p.m. Meat draw 5:30 p.m.
Special events:
3rd Thursday of the month 7 p.m. executive meeting and 7:30 p.m. general meeting (members only)
3rd Sunday of the month Ladies Auxiliary Meeting (members only)
Hall rentals available at reasonable prices. Call 705-488-3462 or 705-928-7105. We welcome everyone to our events and we look forward to seeing you!

Branch 129 Haliburton

Mondays: Bridge 1 p.m. Schofield Rm. Youth darts 6:30 to 8 p.m. Clubroom 10 to 18 years of age. All are welcome, no experience necessary
Tuesdays: League darts 7 p.m.
Wednesdays: Bid Euchre 1 p.m. start – Main Hall. Bingo doors open at 6 p.m. Bingo 7 p.m. FirstWed of each month with jackpot. Follow Facebook.com/Branch129 Bingo for the most up-to-date information
Thursdays: General Meeting third Thursday of the month, 6:30 p.m. All members urged to attend.
Ladies Auxiliary last Thursday of the month at 1 p.m.
Fridays: Five meat draw, five prizes each draw, first draw 4:30 p.m., last draw 6:30 p.m. Tickets $2 per draw. Paul Sisson, MC. Friday fun darts from 4:30 p.m. and onwards. 50/50 Draw 5:40 p.m.
Whether you're planning a function for 10 or 200, call Cheryl Waller at 905-447-7741, email haliburtonlegionrentals@gmail.com or visit haliburtonlegion.com. Everyone is welcome! Club room hours: Mon. 3 to 6 p.m., Tues. 3 to 9 p.m., Wed/Thurs. 3 to 6 p.m. Fri. 3 to 7 p.m.

Branch 636 Minden

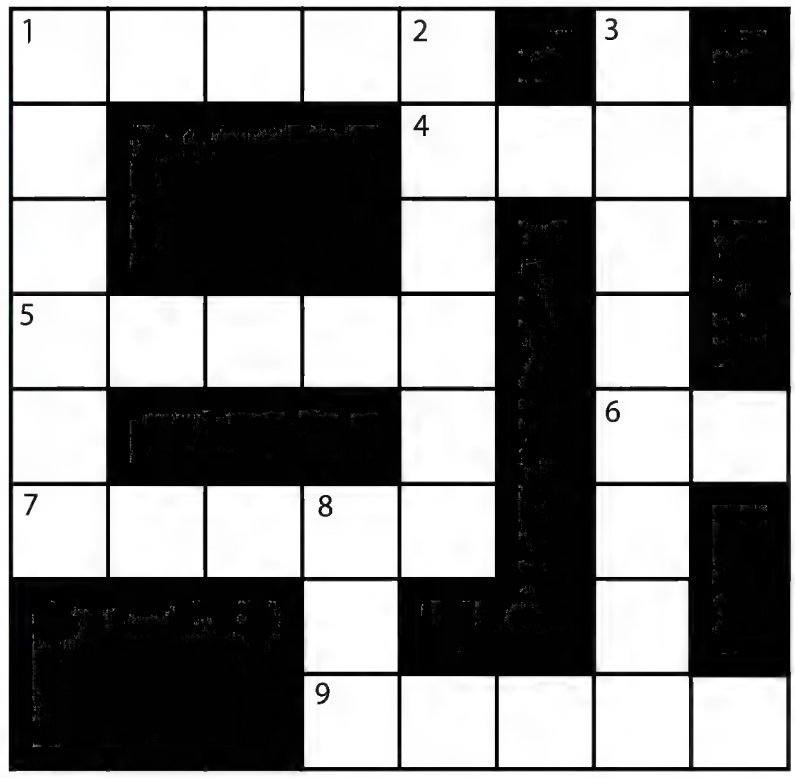
Lunch - Monday to Friday
Monday: Rug Hookers every second week. Bid Euchre 1 to 3 p.m.
Tuesday: Food 5 p.m. Canoe FM Bingo 6 p.m.
Thursday: Cribbage 1 to 3 p.m., Darts 7 to 9 p.m. and Euchre 7 to 9 p.m.
Every other Friday: Karaoke 8 to 11 p.m.
Friday Fish & Chips, Wings. Lunch 11a.m. to 2 p.m. and Dinner 4 to 7 p.m.
Saturday All Day Breakfast 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. with three Meat draws at 11 a.m.
Call ahead any day for take-out: 705-286-4541.
Schedules are subject to change without notice.
Check our Facebook page Minden Legion Branch 636 for more info.

Branch 624 Wilberforce

Hours - Sunday: Special Events Only, Monday: 7 to 10 p.m., Tuesday: Closed, Wednesday: 2 to 10 p.m., Thursday: 2 to 6 p.m., Friday: 2 to 11 p.m., Saturday: 2 to 9 p.m.
Mondays: Jan. 26 Darts $5/player 7 p.m.
Tuesdays: Jan. 27 Veteran's and Seniors Exercise Club. Starts at 1:30 p.m.
Wednesdays: Jan. 21, 28 Darts $5/player 2 p.m.
Jan. 21, 28 Quick Supper Menu changes weekly $10. 5 to 6:30 p.m.
JAN. 21, 28 Open Cribbage 6:30 p.m. – No need to pre-register
Thursdays: Jan. 22 HHHS Social Rec 10 a.m.
Fridays: Jan. 30 Fish and Chips 1pc/$15, 2pc/$20. 5 to 8 p.m.
Jan. 23 Community Care 55+ Lunch $17. noon
Wings and Jam Session $15/lb. 5 to 8 p.m.
Saturday:
Jan. 24, 31 Meat Draw 3 p.m.
Jan. 24 Pat and Phyllis Gallen Lake Trout Ice Fishing Derby. Weigh in 3 p.m.
Jan. 24 Karaoke 8 p.m.
Jan. 31 Nacho Average Trivia 7 p.m. $5/Player
Call the Legion for more info 705-448-222

kids' corner

Crossword Puzzle



ACROSS
1. Related to onions
4. Passage of minutes
5. Reason
6. Artificial intelligence
7. Liquid meals
9. Browned bread

DOWN
1. Scoops liquid
2. Bases for soups
3. Importance given
8. Cooking vessel

Answers:
Across
1. Leeks 4. Time 5. Logic 6. AI 7. Soups 9. Toast
Down
1. Ladles 2. Stocks 3. Emphasis 8. Pot

CANADA MONTH HISTORY

1915

"In Flanders Fields," a war poem in the form of a rondeau, is written by Canadian physician and poet Lieutenant-Colonel John McCrae.

Food FACT:

This soup is traditionally smooth and creamy and often begins with a shellfish stock.

Answer: Bisque

NEW WORD

CHOWDER

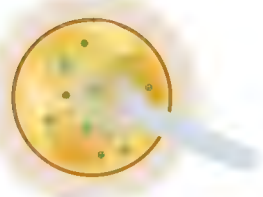
thick, hearty soup defined by its chunky texture

"How they say that in..."

English: Soup
Spanish: Sopa
Italian: Minestra
French: Soupe
German: Suppe

Did You KNOW?

The earliest archaeological evidence of consuming soup dates back to 6,000 BC, when the soup featured hippopotamus meat, sparrows, lentils, and vegetables.



Get the PICTURE?

Can you guess what the bigger picture is?

Answer: Noodle soup

classifieds@haliburtonpress.com
Deadline Thursday at Noon

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25 Words
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Only $15 +HST

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Winter Edge II Snowtires. 235/55 R18 100H on new steel rims. Paid over $1,900 last year. $900 Call **705-344-2355**

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BUSINESS FOR SALE

FOR SALE. Into the Blue Woodfired Pizza Business. Seasonal truck and catering business. Comes fully equipped and ready to go for the 2026 season. Contact **info@abbeygardens.ca** for more details and information

COMMERCIAL SPACE FOR RENT

Meeting Space for Rent: Blue Sky Studio at Haliburton Chiropractic. Bright open space downtown with private entrance and washroom. Available for rent by the hour, half or full day. Contact: **705-457-3500** info@haliburtonchiropractic.com

FOR RENT

Newly renovated 2-unit house on 9.5 scenic acres near Haliburton. LOWER: 1-bed, 1-bath. Features open-concept living, new appliances, in-unit laundry and outdoor living spaces. 10 minutes from Haliburton & perfect for peaceful living. Contact: info@aboveboardcarpentry.com **705-455-2196**

Large one-bedroom unit apartment available for rent immediately. Mature, non-smoking tenants preferred. Fully furnished optional. Includes water access, private entrance, and 400 sq foot screened porch. 10 minute drive from Haliburton. $1750 per month. Includes hydro, heat, wifi, and parking. Must have a vehicle. First and last required. Please call **705-457-0861**. Pictures available upon request.

Spacious one bedroom, one bath lower apartment located in the heart of Minden. The apartment provides a perfect blend of town and country living. Features include front door access, open concept living, in-unit laundry and outdoor living spaces, internet and preferential parking spots. $1,875 All inclusive plus shared hydro. Please Contact: **647-394-4899**. Photos available upon request.

WANTED

Wanted: scrap cars and trucks. Cash paid. Please call **705-286-3758** or **cell 249-332-1212**

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County Life is looking for Rural Route drivers.
For details call **(705) 457-1037**
or **jenniferm@haliburtonpress.com**

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The Echo The Times County Life

Community Events

Send your event listing to classifieds@haliburtonpress.com

Savouring Stories
When: Thursday, January 22 from 11 a.m. to noon
Where: Highland Grove Library
Each month, we explore the fascinating world of food through stories, history, shared experiences, and cooking (every second month). No registration required.

Barbara Reid Virtual Demonstration Make a Clay Picture
When: Saturday, January 24 at 11 a.m.
Where: Minden Hills Library and Dysart Library at 11 a.m.
Canadian author and illustrator Barbara Reid is inviting families to get creative together. Join us in the library to watch her special virtual demonstration and make a clay picture using her signature illustration style. All supplies are provided. Recommended for ages 4+. Registration required. Call 705-457-2241 or email programs@haliburtonlibrary.ca to register

Community Breakfast Event
When: Saturday, Jan. 24 from 9 to 11 a.m.
Where: Haliburton United Church, Fellowship Room 10 George St.
Everyone's Welcome! An invitation to a warm and friendly morning filled with good food and great company. Donations are heartily welcomed and will be put to good use. Part of the proceeds help support the elementary school breakfast program. Questions? Please email nelbrekky@victoriadistrict.com.

Teen Hot Chocolate Cafe
When: Monday, January 26 between 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Where: Dysart Library
Warm up at our Teen Hot Chocolate Café! Enjoy a delicious hot chocolate – pile yours high with marshmallows, whipped cream, sprinkles, cookies, and more. You can also pick up a Teen Exam Week Survival Kit while at the library.

Teen Movie Matinee
When: Monday, Jan. 26 from 1 to 3 .p.m.
Where: Dysart Library (Haliburton Village)
Take a break and chill with friends. Drop in for a screening of a popular teen-friendly film – perfect for unwinding after exams or studying. No registration required!

The Wilberforce Heritage Guild - 2026 Annual Meeting
When: Monday Jan. 26 at 7 p.m..
Where: The Red Cross Outpost Museum, 2314 Loop Road, Wilberforce ON
The meeting will include a presentation of our events and activities of the year. Everyone Welcome. For information contact Barb Schofield at 705-448-2598 or wilberforcebarb@yahoo.ca.

Knitting Circle
When: Tuesday, Jan. 27 from 1 to 3 p.m.
Where: Wilberforce Library
Drop in for a cozy afternoon of stitching, chatting, and community. All ages and skill levels are welcome (knitters and crocheters alike).

Teen Movie Matinee
When: Tuesday, Jan. 27 from 1 to 3 p.m.
Where: Dysart Library (Haliburton Village)
Take a break and chill with friends. Drop in for a screening of a popular teen-friendly film—perfect for unwinding after exams or studying. No registration required!

Family Literacy Day Fun
When: Tuesday, Jan. 27 During Regular Branch Hours
Where: Wilberforce, Minden Hills, Dysart (Haliburton Village), Gooderham, Cardiff, Stanhope or Highland Grove Library
Drop in for hands-on fun! Create your own bookmark, explore family cookbooks, and take part in a food-themed literacy scavenger hunt—turn in your completed card for a prize! Take home free literacy resources inspired by this year's theme, Make Mealtime Family Learning Time, filled with ideas to learn, read, and connect together. No registration required.

Teen Movie Matinee
When: Wednesday, Jan. 28 from 1 to 3 p.m.
Where: Dysart Library (Haliburton Village)
Take a break and chill with friends. Drop in for a screening of a popular teen-friendly film—perfect for unwinding after exams or studying. No registration required!

Teen Movie Matinee
When: Thursday, Jan. 29 from 1 to 3 p.m.
Where: Dysart Library (Haliburton Village)
Take a break and chill with friends. Drop in for a screening of a popular teen-friendly film – perfect for unwinding after exams or studying. No registration required!

Recurring events

Bridge for Seniors
When: Mondays at 1 p.m.
Where: Haliburton Legion - Schofield Rm
All welcome

Haliburton Legion Walking Group
When: Mondays at 9 to 10 a.m.
Where: Haliburton Legion - Remembrance Hall
A safe walking environment. Lead by an Occupational therapist.

Free Balanced Fitness and Active Social Senior Classes
When: Every second and fourth Tuesday of each month at 10 to 11 a.m.
Where: Haliburton Legion - Remembrance Hall
All seniors are welcome. Group led by Registered Recreation Therapist

Bid Euchre
When: Wednesdays at 1 p.m.
Where: Haliburton Legion - Remembrance Hall
All welcome!

Duplicate Bridge - Please arrange for a partner.
When: Wednesdays at 12:45 at Park Lane Apartments. Fridays at 12:45 at Haliburton Legion, Schofield Room.

Local Service Directory

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63 Maple Ave., Haliburton **Phone: 705-457-1550**
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Highlands wood will warm ice storm victims

Haliburton County is doing its part to help the victims of the ice storm that ripped through eastern Ontario earlier this month.

Haliburton County Warden Murray Fearrey announced that a load of cured firewood has been sent into the region. The load left Thursday from the Kinmount Wood products yard near Wilberforce.

"We worked through the Emergency Measures Organization," Fearrey said. "They directed the load to Alexandria, where it arrived on Friday."

The double load of dried, cut and split wood was unloaded by army personnel. It is being made available to local residents who require the fuel to heat their homes.

Fearrey said the suggestion for the firewood donation came from a number of reeves in the county who felt the local communities should be helping out somehow. The firewood donation appeared to be the most appropriate since Haliburton County exports firewood to other parts of the province.

He noted that Anson, Hindon and Minden Reeve Jeanne Anthon mentioned it at a committee meeting and that the Snowdon Council had discussed the idea of sending some help at its regular Monday night meeting.

According to the Warden, the load contained 17 bush cords or about 51 face cords of wood. The cost of the wood, including delivery, was about $3500.

Monmouth Reeve Keith Tallman, who visited the wood supply yard near Wilberforce, commented that the gift of wood was appropriate and the right thing to do. "They need our help. We have the wood. Who knows, some day we could be looking for assistance in a similar situation. It is good to be able to lend a hand and help them out," Tallman said.

(For a personal account of the trials of living through the storm, see the column on page 6. Ontario Hydro and Ministry of Natural Resources personnel from the local offices, as well a number of private contractors have moved into the stricken area to assist with the clean-up. Anyone wishing to make a financial contribution to the Red Cross relief effort may do so at the Toronto Dominion Bank in Minden, through donations being collected this week at Archie Stouffer Elementary School (see story below) or by calling the Red Cross at 1-800-850-5090.)

Monmouth Reeve Keith Tallman with Kinmount Wood Products yard foreman Ken Ablett, inspects some of the firewood which the county sent to the victims of the ice storm in eastern Ontario. The 17 bush cords were delivered to Alexandria where residents without heat could use it to stoke their fireplaces and wood stoves.

ASES students issue icy challenge

Students and staff at Archie Stouffer Elementary School have issued a challenge to all of the schools in the District #15 School Board. They are challenging each school to donate a dollar for every student and staff member. The money will be donated to those in need in eastern Ontario and Quebec.

At the Minden school, donations from students and staff will be accepted all this week. The public is invited to get involved as well. The money raised will go to the Canadian Red Cross to aid in the relief and cleanup effort.

Special Education Resource Teacher, Eric Thompson, came up with the idea last year during the Manitoba flood. At that time ASES raised $950.30 for the relief effort in and around Winnipeg last spring. This year, before he had a chance to suggest the fundraiser again, several teachers approached him about the idea. "It is a good opportunity for the students to collect and organize money," said Thompson. "It becomes an extension of the learning process. This will give them a chance to apply what they have learned in a real situation. There is learning involved as well as the humanitarian aspect."

The Icy Challenge was sent to the superintendents of the District #15 School Board, who then distributed the information to all of schools. The school board includes schools in Victoria, Haliburton and Muskoka.

The money will be collected by the students' council representatives of each class,

(more on page 3)

CHACE Daycare given green light for another year

by Ariel White

CHACE Inc. Daycare has been given a reprieve. The County of Haliburton Agency for Child Enrichment Board of Directors made the unanimous decision to maintain the facility for the next fiscal year, at a meeting on January 13.

The daycare centre faced certain closure on November 21, 1997, but after protest from concerned parents, the date was postponed until March 31 of this year, with the provision that the service increased both enrolment and funding support by that deadline.

CHACE Director Diane Loucks said that the centre is working hard to do just that. "It's coming along slowly, but we are on the right track," said Loucks. "We are very, very pleased with this decision. It's a go for the next fiscal year."

According to Loucks, there are 2.5 full day equivalent spaces that have been filled at the centre, with another two, pending subsidy, and 1.5 other possible participants. It is hoped that nine spaces will be filled by the March deadline. There are still spaces available for both toddlers and preschool children in the CHACE program.

As of January 13, the parents fundraising committee had gathered $5,869.09. The money was raised through a cheese sale and the CHACE daycare dream raffle. The centre is hoping to raise another $7200 for the daycare coffers throughout the coming year. There are plans for other fundraising campaigns in the next couple of months, which include the sale of Nevada tickets at the Esso Station in Norland, as well as a bingo on February 8 at 12:30. The daycare centre is also accepting donations from the community. "They (the fundraising committee) are doing very well and have made plans for projects into June and July," said Loucks.

Gord Schakelaar, the president of CHACE said that the March 31 deadline was making it difficult for the enrolment committee to entice new participants into the program. He said that no one wants to go to the trouble of enrolling a child in a daycare facility that may only be open for another six weeks. "The fundraising committee is working hard to meet the goals that we set out for it. But we felt that we had to give the enrolment a chance," said Schakelaar. "How can we expect the committee to do its job if the daycare is going to close?"

Diane Loucks agrees with Schakelaar, that the enrolment will benefit from the announcement. "This will maintain the stability in the program," she said.

Although the daycare will continue to operate, the board is still expecting the enrolment to meet its target of nine full day equivalent spaces, especially with toddlers and preschoolers.

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